Children out of school

*163. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that out of 200 million children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, only 120 million are in schools;

(b) if so, the steps Government are taking to ensure their attendance in schools;

(c) whether the necessary infrastructure could be created from the existing financial resources; and

(d) if so, the time-frame thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) Estimated populations in the age group of 6 to 14 years in March, 2003, was 20.9 crore against which provisional figure of enrolment in schools in classes I-VIII, as on 30.09.2003 was 17.7 crore.

(b) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-day Meal (MDM) are the two main Schemes being implemented to ensure universal participation of children in Elementary Education.

(c) and (d) Allocation for Elementary Education has been substantially enhanced during the Xth Plan, including for creation necessary infrastructure. However, infrastructure requirements keep growing, and it is therefore not possible to indicate a specific time-frame for meeting such requirements fully.

Natural Heritage Sites

*164. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to include the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats in the exclusive club of World Heritage Sites;

(b) if so, the number of the natural heritage sites which have been identified so far in the country; and

(c) whether any preliminary surveys have been conducted by UNESCO to fulfill the required parameters?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Preliminary

work for inclusion of Western Ghats in the Tentative List for inscription on the World Heritage list is underway.

(b) As on date, there are five natural heritage sites that have been included in the World Heritage Sites. These sities are:—

(i) Kaziranga National Park, (Assam);

(ii) Manas Tiger Reserve, (Assam);

(iii) Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, (West Bengal);

(iv) Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, (Rajasthan); and

(v) Nanda Devi National Park including Valley of Flowers, (Uttaranchal).

(c) No, Sir.

Education for girl child

*165. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to provide free education from VI to XII to every girl from a 'single child family' in schools affiliated to CBSE;

(b) whether it is also a fact that UGC is also planning to launch a postgraduate scholarship for girls who have come from 'single child family';

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the sources from where his Ministry is going to pool the resources for implementation of these two schemes; and

(e) whether his Ministry can think of getting some money from Prathmik Shiksha Kosh for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has, *vide* its circular dated 18.10.2005, directed schools affiliated to it to provide full waiver of all fees (including tuition fee and all other fees under any head except meals & transportation) charged by them, to each girl student from class VI onwards who is a "Single Child" of her parents either with immediate effect or from the next academic session. Affiliation Bye-laws of the Board have been amended accordingly.